



King County

Ron Sims

King County Executive

News Release

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King County housing and community development programs threatened by Bush budget proposal

Critical federal funding to support local housing and community development projects across King County is in jeopardy if significant cuts called for in President George Bush's recently announced budget proposal are approved by Congress this year. The Administration's FY07 budget calls for a major reduction in funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program that has helped the county and its cities build affordable housing and create more livable communities.

"It is unconscionable that the President has proposed to cut the CDBG program by more than 25 percent," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "King County and its suburban communities use this federal funding for a wide range of housing, community development, and economic development activities that affect not only day-to-day livability for many of our lower-income neighbors, but the very future of our communities."

"The CDBG Program has been critically important to our region's well-being for over 30 years. It is a vital component in our efforts to end homelessness and improve the quality of life for lower-income residents. It is urgent that this funding be preserved," concluded Sims.

King County and its suburban cities have used these funds – over \$6 million per year on average – to improve our communities in many valuable ways. Examples from recent years include the following:

- **Helping the working poor avert homelessness:** CDBG funds prevent evictions by providing small emergency loans for working poor households. About 200 households throughout King County outside of Seattle are assisted each year, with an 85-90 percent success rate. *Media contact: Donna Dziak, Housing Stability Program, Fremont Public Association, 206-694-6763*
- **Creating and retaining decent affordable housing:** CDBG funds helped to build or renovate a number of projects around the county.
 - CDBG funds helped acquire an old Coast Guard site in Redmond that will create 60 units of transitional/homeless housing, 20 low-income home ownership opportunities through Habitat for Humanity, and 85 moderate-income home ownership opportunities through a private developer. *Media contact: Doreen Marchione, President and CEO, Hopelink, 425-869-6018.*
 - CDBG funds helped acquire the land for the Greenbrier development in Woodinville, which has 100 affordable rental units for low-income seniors and families and 70 affordable

ownership homes. *Media contact: Marie Stake, Communications Manager, City of Woodinville 425-877-2267*

- King County has directly funded 139 affordable home ownership opportunities with CDBG funds, with additional opportunities currently in the pipeline. *Media contact: Mia Walteson, Executive Director, Eastside Habitat for Humanity 425-869-6007* Note: Mia can arrange for interviews with a new homeowner willing to speak to the media.
- King County's CDBG funds every year help 200-250 low-income homeowners, many of them seniors, make critically-needed repairs and disability accommodations to their homes. *Media contact: Kevin Chan, King County Housing Repair Program 206 296-8652.* Note: Interviews with community clients can be arranged upon request.

➤ **Providing a catalyst for economic development, jobs creation and business district revitalization:**

- CDBG funds are helping to revitalize White Center, one of the most distressed communities in King County by contributing to the development of the King County Housing Authority's Greenbridge community, a new mixed-income community that will replace the old and deteriorating Park Lake Homes public housing project. *Media contacts: Tim Healy 206-763-1510, and Robert Leykam 206-223-5062, Greenbridge Community Task Force*
- CDBG funds helped the City of Kent acquire a 15-acre site near the heart of its downtown to help revitalize the downtown area. When fully developed, at least 250 new jobs will be created and made available to low-income job-seekers. *Media contact: Nathan Torgelson, Economic Development Director, 253-856-5703)*
- City of Black Diamond used CDBG funds to construct a sidewalk along Morgan Street to provide safe access to the schools for the lower-income west side area of Black Diamond. *Media contact: Howard Botts, Mayor, City of Black Diamond, 360-886-2560*

➤ **Improving public infrastructure in lower-income cities:** CDBG funds have been vitally important to small cities in constructing much-needed water and sewer system improvements.

- The City of Carnation was recently awarded \$500,000 in CDBG funds to help low-income homeowners, many of them senior citizens, connect to a new sewer system that will replace failing septic systems in an area that has been declared a public health hazard by Public Health-Seattle & King County. *Media contact: Bill Brandon, Carnation City Administrator, 425-333-4192*

➤ **Improving the ability of health and human service agencies to serve low-to moderate-income residents effectively and efficiently.** CDBG funds have been instrumental in assisting non-profit agencies to accommodate food distribution through local food banks in small county communities.

- Hopelink Sno-Valley utilized CDBG funds to renovate their community center in the City of Carnation to provide essential services to low-income households throughout the Snoqualmie Valley. *Media contact: Doreen Marchione, President and CEO, Hopelink, 425-869-6018.*
- Maple Valley Food Bank is in the final stages of construction in a facility expansion, adding warehouse space to its existing facility for food distribution. The additional space will allow the food bank to increase its volume of food distribution and enable a warm environment for sorting and packaging food boxes as well as a warm, dry place for clients to come in from the cold to pick up basic food items. *Media contact: Lila Henderson 425-432-8633)*

For more information call Linda Peterson, Manager, King County Housing and Community Development Program at 206-296-8661 or go to www.metrokc.gov/dchs/csd/housing.